

Healing from the Inside Out

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
THE GAZETTE

Lassie Hurley came to Dr. Cynthia Durakis with The Healing Tree in April with pain in her neck and shoulders and her fingers tingling. “Now those are great.” She has returned recently with pain in her back.

Durakis asks, “were you on your feet a lot last week?” Hurley works events so she can be on her feet a lot and also sitting a lot at her desk. Durakis has Hurley lie on her stomach on the exam table. She starts the appointment with an evaluation. “Do you feel better?” Durakis places her hands in the small of Hurley’s back. She has Hurley lift each leg backward at the knee. “I am looking for misalignment that could be affecting function.”

Durakis tests to make sure Hurley’s muscles are nice and strong. “The good thing is we can prevent some things before they happen. The body will manage dysfunction for a long time without any full blown issues.”

Durakis is primarily a chiropractor whose uses chiropractic adjustment to help people restore normal function. Most people come to deal with pain. But she explains if the soft tissue, the internal visceral health isn’t working, she also does nutritional counseling. She says it can be tricky about nutrition. Things aren’t black and white. Individuals don’t necessarily react the same way to different foods.

“I’m helping heal people from the inside out.” But she adds that she is also a coach. “When I graduated, I thought I just go make an adjustment, but I learned there is a lot more to it than that.”

Hurley says, “it is a little tender here, but it’s really bad there.” Durakis asks, “Are you wearing the custom orthotics?” Hurley

says about half of her patients use them. “I wear them myself.” Ideally you should wear them most of the day.”

“Are you walking every day? In these boots? Can you wear your sneakers back and forth to the bus? I can tell your hip is better than last time.”

Hurley says, “I always feel better when I leave.”

Kristen Brasseaux is next. She has been coming for about three months for really severe tension headaches and shoulder and neck pain. Brasseaux explains she has had a sort of crazy week with the unexpected death of her husband’s co-worker in a crash. Everyone has been dealing with it.

“Go ahead and lay face down on your stomach.” Durakis says, “My job is to normalize the mechanics of the spine and help

the nervous system adjust. Less is more when you make an adjustment.”

“Take a deep breath. You are very tight in the neck.” But with all of the tension of this last week Brasseaux has not had one of her tension headaches. She says, “This is huge.”

Durakis says, “You are managing it better now. You are more equipped.”

Brasseaux is a graphic designer who sits at a computer all day. She has made adjustments in her posture and equipment. But she adds that she is studying nutrition and wants 100 percent to go that direction.

Durakis asks, “Have you stopped sleeping on your stomach?”

Brasseaux says, “Not sleeping on my stomach is so much better than I thought it would be.”

Durakis explains that your sleeping position is almost as important as your sitting position. When you sleep on your stomach you have to turn your neck to breathe.”

Durakis says she has patients of all ages



This sign at The Healing Tree on Mt. Vernon Avenue says it all

PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE GAZETTE



Full evaluation of patient before treatments begin.



Cassie Hurley with Dr. Cynthia Durakis.

but, “you attract what you are.” She says there are a lot of women in her age group who are menopausal struggling with transition, gaining weight, hot flashes. She finds that most women around here in Del Ray want to age with energy and stay active.

She says it takes a commitment from the patient to work with her and not everyone has it. “Some people just want me to fix it, like giving an aspirin.” Durakis was headed

to be a lawyer. “But I talked to female attorneys. They were unhappy, working 80 hours a week.” Coincidentally her parents were seeing a chiropractor and “a light bulb went off. The patients were so pleased to be there.” Durakis had been part of a group practice on Prince Street in Alexandria since 1994 and has been a sole practitioner at the Healing Tree on Mount Vernon for four years.

On the Move: Travel Near and Far

BY MARY LEE ANDERSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
SENIOR SERVICES OF ALEXANDRIA



Mary Lee Anderson

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stated in their 2016 State of Aging and Health Report that the population of Americans age 65 and older will double in the next 25 years. There is no doubt that the men and women moving into this demographic want to continue living active, healthy and interesting lives.

For many older adults, travel is a top priority for a variety of reasons. It can improve your general mood and outlook about life, provide opportunities for social interaction, and broaden your horizons through learning about different cultures. We don’t even have to travel a great distance, just getting out for the afternoon with friends can brighten your mood and perspective on life.

Senior Services of Alexandria’s Nov. 14 Speaker Series, “On the Move: Travel Near and Far,” will cover exciting international and domestic trips, explore vari-

ous local travel options, and provide practical advice for getting around town. There will be speakers from AARP; DASH-Alexandria Transit Company; Potomac Riverboat; and an experienced Road Scholar expert.

Participants will learn all about the health benefits of travel for older adults; discover leisure travel and enrichment opportunities; hear about what DASH is doing to improve services for city residents - including seniors; and get details about the most relaxing way to see the sights along the Potomac River.

Thursday, Nov. 14 at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2701 Cameron Mills Road in Alexandria. Registration starts at 9:30 am and the official program runs from 10 am – 12 noon. It is free and open to the public. We ask that attendees register online at seniorservicesalex.org or call 703-836-4414, ext. 110



Kristen Brasseaux with Dr. Cynthia Durakis.